

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
EASTGATE/I-90  
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2011  
5:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-108

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Bohman, Lindy Bruce, Dave Elliott, Jay Hamlin, Jeffrey Hummer, Francois Larrivee, Mark Ludtka, Tom Perea, Rob Pucher, Rachel Solemsaas, John Stokes, David Vranizan, Cynthia Welti

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Carrie Courter Blanton, Jim Stanton

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Franz Loewenherz, Transportation; Mike Bergstrom, Planning & Community Development

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Gerry Lindsay

**1. Call To Order**

Co-Chair Larrivee called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

A. December 2, 2010

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Ludtka. Second was by Mr. Hummer and the motion carried unanimously.

B. January 6, 2011

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Ludtka. Second was by Ms. Bruce and the motion carried unanimously.

C. January 15, 2011

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Ludtka. Second was by Mr. Perea and the motion carried unanimously.

**3. Presentation by Bellevue College**

Rachel Solemsaas, Bellevue College Vice President of Administrative Services and CAC member, explained that the college's [last master plan](#) was developed in 2008. The document is considered to be a live document that is constantly being updated, particularly as funding allocations change. Bellevue College is a regional facility that is focused on student success, excellence in continued learning, a strong college culture, and engaging and enriching the community. The college was established in 1965 and is the state's third largest educational institution, followed only by the University of

Washington and Washington State University. The current enrollment exceeds 37,000, 1600 of which are international students. The college confers some 83 degrees and certificates, and provides continuing education and basic skills training. Accreditation as a four-year university was awarded in 2010, which triggered the name change from Bellevue Community College to Bellevue College.

Ms. Solemsaas said the college is in the process of updating the 2008 master plan. The goals are respecting and enhancing the campus environment, respecting the environment as a whole, maximizing flexibility, maintaining a safe, healthy and accessible place for learning, and supporting the community. A state-of-the-art science building was constructed in 2010 and is in operation. Signage reflecting the college's new name was updated.

A map of the campus was shared with the committee. It was noted that the plan for the campus is to create more of a presence on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE while capitalizing the current buildings and facilities. Funding for design of a new health sciences building has been received but it will not be constructed for another six years. Property acquisitions aimed at increasing the overall size of the campus and enhancing the student housing program have been made and are being planned.

Mr. Perea asked how many on-campus students the college currently has. Derek Grown with Bellevue College indicated that some 13,000 cars come to the campus on a daily basis. Ms. Solemsaas said classes are offered as early as 7:00 a.m. and end as late as 10:00 p.m. which helps to spread out the campus load.

Mr. Hummer asked if there are plans to increase the number of recreational facilities on the campus. Ms. Solemsaas said the current master plan does not include expansion in that direction. The college continues to offer physical education and outdoor activities for students and the community. The softball and soccer fields were recently updated, and there are two full gyms for indoor events. The facilities can be rented by the public.

Mr. Elliott asked how state funding reductions and increases in tuition will impact Bellevue College. Ms. Solemsaas said the school has three basic funding sources for capital projects. One is the state allocation of bond dollars. About ten percent of the tuition fees go to help pay off the bonds. Over the past few years the allocation has totaled about half a billion dollars which was split among 34 colleges. With reduced funding from the state, capital projects are having to be stretched over longer periods of time. A second source is local capital, which can be borrowed. Public/private partnerships are the third source of funding; they are usually focused on housing programs.

Ms. Solemsaas explained that Bellevue College has several satellite campuses that offer continuing education programs. In November 2009 a new location for the north campus center was purchased; it is located on NE 29<sup>th</sup> Street. This is a former Microsoft building, and is being remodeled and will open in April 2011. A purchase and sale agreement was recently signed for a 20-acre property in the Issaquah Highlands; the site could eventually house 314,000 square feet of additional educational space.

Ms. Bruce asked if the new campus on NE 29<sup>th</sup> Street will attract additional commuters to 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Ms. Solemsaas said a traffic study has been conducted which concluded that the site will not have a major impact on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE given that the college already offers programs and has office space on that arterial near SR-520.

Mr. Growen said currently about 75 percent of the college's employees and two-thirds of

the students drive their own vehicles to the main campus. Twenty percent of the students use transit, while another eleven percent carpool or rideshare. Between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. more than a thousand vehicles per hour enter the campus; the rate slowly decreases as the day progresses. Overall, however, more than 500 vehicles per hour move onto or off of the campus between 10:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. A parking study was completed as part of the permitting process for the new health sciences building; it revealed that the most cars parked on campus at any one time is about 3500. The issue is less with supply and more with distribution; the lots closest to the main building fill quickly during the peak hours, while the outer lots are never completely full. The new building will displace some parking, but the study suggests there will still be an oversupply of at least 100 stalls. Various transportation demand management scenarios are being considered to reduce the parking demand; one option is to establish a parking charge for both students and faculty.

Ms. Solemsaas said the projected annual increase in enrollment for the main campus has conservatively been tagged at five percent. During the economic slowdown enrollment has increased substantially. The highest growth potential, however, is anticipated to occur at the satellite campuses and online.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Perea, Ms. Solemsaas said the college is in the early stages of discussing its housing program. The experiences of other colleges and universities have been studied. Green River Community College has a housing program that offers apartment units; Edmonds Community College has a secure building with apartment units. The focus is generally on housing international students. Bellevue College does not believe it is in a position to offer dormitory housing.

Ms. Solemsaas said the master plan will address on-campus vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Along with improved campus movements, the focus will be on improving safety. Accommodations for bike commuters will be improved as well, including a connection with the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway.

Mr. Elliott said the commercial area along 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE was studied by the city several years ago. The study included looking at redevelopment of the gas station area and the potential of putting an office building up against it. A college version of transit-oriented development was not studied, though perhaps it should be. Either the Redmond or Renton transit-oriented development could serve as a good model.

#### **4. Study Area Discussion**

##### **A. Tour Debrief**

Senior Planner Mike Bergstrom said staff assembled all of the [comments](#) made by the Committee members at each stop along the [tour](#). He said quite a few comments were made regarding the first four stops, which were around the Factoria area. The comments had to do with everything from visual aspects to the lack of greenery, the need for better signage regarding how to get back to I-405, and the status of the Factoria development. There were also questions asked about the trail connections, positive comments about the consolidation of office buildings with good access to retail, and the need to keep scale and massing in mind as future development is contemplated. Several suggested the area would be a good place for a light rail stop.

Questions about how well a traffic circle would work were asked about several areas in along the tour. The first point where it came up was at the fifth stop on Factoria Boulevard.

While traveling up Eastgate Way one committee member indicated support for having a vehicle overpass spanning the freeway, but the person concluded the topography would make such a facility very difficult to construct. A non-motorized access in the general area was mentioned as a possibility.

A question was asked about the portion of Richards Creek that extends to the south of I-90. Mr. Bergstrom explained that while the mapping shows the creek only on the east side of Factoria Boulevard, it appears that the stream might split and include a branch on the west side. The drainage is all to Richards Valley.

One committee member wanted to know if the owner of the RV park beyond the Eastgate Plaza is involved in the Eastgate/I-90 study in any way. Mr. Bergstrom said staff has been in regular contact with the property owner to provide updates about the process.

A comment was made about the eastbound access to I-90 near point 12 that might reduce congestion at the intersection of 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SE 37<sup>th</sup> Street.

On the north side of the freeway, suggestions were made regarding locations that might be appropriate for roundabouts.

In response to the discussion about a potential connection from 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to 158<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, a resident on the tour said they would not be in favor because of the low-speed, two-lane residential character of the street; their concern was that the connection could add traffic on that road.

Around points 16 and 17 in the interior of the office area questions were raised regarding whether or not additional retail uses should be allowed. Some pointed out the opportunities for new road connections, and someone suggested a new parking garage should be built and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail should be run through the area.

A number of comments were made regarding the area near the park at point 18. Some of the comments were related to the park itself, which is not part of the planning study but which does have a connection to the study area. Someone suggested the potential for making stormwater treatment a part of the future park. It was suggested the park should include a connection to the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail, and that part of the field should be restored to more of a native state. Mr. Bergstrom noted that the park master plan proposes no vehicle access from 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

With regard to the area farther east past Sunset Village and the access to Bellevue College, the suggestion was made that a landscaped entry should be created near the freeway overpass. The suggestion was also made that the area would be appropriate for increased density and mixed use development. The same suggestion was made regarding the area near the entrance to the college. A few comments were made in support of housing and/or retail at that location.

With regard to the area closer to the park and ride, the suggestion was made that a trail connection via the SE 142<sup>nd</sup> Place overpass should be created. Another person suggested high-capacity transit serving the eastern area be considered for the site. Someone commented that floors should be added to the park-and-ride garage to support additional uses, including commercial.

To the east near the Lincoln Executive Center, the suggestion was made that the area

would be appropriate for retail and residential uses given its proximity to the college campus and the park and ride. It was suggested that incentives should be considered for allowing increased height and density in exchange for community assets. Another person suggested the back side of the Lincoln Executive Center should be rezoned from Light Industrial to something more appropriate.

Similar comments were made with regard to the area to the west along Eastgate Way. Some suggested the King County site that was used temporarily as a park and ride would be appropriate for mixed use or retail. The comment was made that something should be done to make the intersection with Richards Road more inviting by adding something like a coffee shop. The general area might also provide opportunities for new development adjacent to the residential and thus serve as a natural buffer to the freeway.

Comments were made that within the Richards Valley industrial area there are opportunities for linking to the college with research and development facilities. Additional height and density could be allowed through incentives, though increased connectivity to the existing roadway infrastructure would be required. One suggestion was made that the area should be used as an experimental land use project with green buildings that might attract a national or global interest. Another comment made was that the area should be left as industrial provided it does not grow and continues to provide jobs.

Mr. Bergstrom said there were some general comments made that were not specific to any site. A couple of the comments dealt with King County Metro Route 271 and the need for general improvements. Some general comments were also made regarding the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail and the need to flush out whether it should be on the south side or the north side of I-90. One suggestion made was that the CAC should set aside one session to focus on that issue.

Not much was said specifically about the Eastgate Plaza Shopping Center. The center clearly is dear to those who live in the surrounding neighborhoods and to many who work in the corridor. The market report suggested the use will remain healthy for the foreseeable future but could become threatened in the future by the growth of grocery stores elsewhere. It is a use that will need to be kept in mind.

Mr. Perea pointed out the forested area south of I-90 and asked if, once the Eastgate area is incorporated, the city could assist in providing a part of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail.

Ms. Welti asked if the Committee should assume annexation of the area will occur. Mr. Bergstrom said annexation has been tried a couple of times but has not yet occurred. It will continue to be on the plate but it will not happen unless the residents want it to happen. He added that an increased level of interest in annexation has been noted. King County certainly wants the area to be annexed.

Co-Chair Hamlin commented that adding access within the Sunset Village area would have a profound impact; it could change the whole character of the area. Mr. Bergstrom said the area is a large pocket of unbroken property, which is unusual.

Mr. Hummer asked if there is room for expanding the Eastgate Plaza Shopping Center. Mr. Bergstrom said he did not know the terms of their lease agreement or anything about their future plans. Some of the adjacent commercial properties are not owned by the LLC that owns the shopping center. To the east of the plaza the zoning changes from Community Business to General Commercial, so the options are different. Any future

vision for the area, however, could cross individual property boundaries.

## B. Land Use Issues and Opportunities

Mr. Bergstrom explained that the goal of the agenda item was to discuss potential evaluation criteria to help provide direction to the land use consultant and serve as a touchstone for the CAC in reviewing the findings of the land use consultant. The evaluation criteria will ultimately be the CAC's refinement of the Council principles. Having the criteria will help the process be more efficient in that it will inform the work of the land use consultant in developing alternatives.

Mr. Bergstrom said the suggestion of staff was to break down the criteria into the thematic areas of market feasibility, economic development, neighborhood compatibility, environmental quality and sustainability, community character, land use and transportation integration, fiscal feasibility, and partnerships. Additionally, staff came up with criteria for each topic area as follows: economic development helps to maintain the city's economic diversity, recognizes the special role the Eastgate area should play in the overall economic mix, accommodates a balance of uses that contribute to the area's economic vitality, and provides for special opportunities in the Eastgate area; neighborhood compatibility promotes the roll of providing neighborhood services for nearby residential neighborhoods, and provides an appropriate transition between Eastgate and the adjacent neighborhoods; environmental quality and sustainability provides measurable benefits when compared to no action, protects or improves sensitive natural features, provides opportunities to integrate the natural and built environments, and improves the environment for public health as compared to a no action scenario; community character creates a sense of arrival or corridor gateway, promotes a legible character and sense of place, improves the beauty and aesthetics of the area, provides an appropriate scale of development, and integrates parks and open space with land use; the integration of transportation and land use matches up local access and circulation patterns, provides accommodations without degrading mobility in other parts of the city, reduces the number of vehicle miles traveled, reduces the use of single-occupant vehicles, addresses the potential for housing to improve the land use/transportation mix, supports planned uses, and includes multimodal transportation solutions; fiscal responsibility seeks accommodating alternatives with modest local public investments in transportation and other infrastructure; and partnerships provide opportunities to implement the desired land use and transportation solutions.

Mr. Stokes where the issues of parks, open space and recreation would be placed in the thematic areas. Mr. Bergstrom proposed including them either in neighborhood compatibility or community character. Mr. Stokes said he would prefer to see the issues stand on their own. He noted that in other parts of the city, parks have specifically been emphasized in line with the notion of the city in a park concept. There are not many park facilities in the Eastgate corridor. He agreed his concerns could be addressed by retitling the community character theme to community character, parks and open space.

Ms. Welti suggested that the notion of neighborhood compatibility should include the concept of neighborhood character. The sense of character in a neighborhood is different from the issue of parks and open space. Neighborhood compatibility absent community character would seem to focus more on good transitions and whether or not there are enough retails uses to support the neighborhood.

Mr. Ludtka suggested neighborhood compatibility could have more to do with the transitions between adjacent neighborhoods, whereas community character is more about the specific study area.

Co-Chair Hamlin said he was not opposed to pulling out the parks piece from community character. That would make the parks aspect more prominent. If the Committee were to conclude later that the separation is not necessary, it could be put back in with community character.

There was agreement to change the title of neighborhood compatibility to compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.

Ms. Bruce observed that community character should be focused on new community character features, such as gateways, rather than on already established community character. With regard to integrating parks and open space with land use, she referenced Sunset Park which was constructed by Wright Runstad and noted that it is an active facility for the most part, not a passive park. She suggested that similar opportunities might exist elsewhere in the corridor.

Senior transportation planner Franz Loewenherz said there is a lot of research being conducted nationwide focused on the extent to which land use can promote and encourage health and fitness. Mr. Perea said the river walk in San Antonio, Texas, and the trails in Scottsdale, Arizona, implement those principles. He suggested the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail could be implemented in some way through incentives offered to developers. The trail could be part of the collective open space for the corridor.

Mr. Stokes concurred, pointing out that it is a quality of life issue that would enhance the corridor as a place to live and work.

Ms. Solemsaas suggested community character involves economic vitality, recreation, and neighborhoods combined in ways that make an area unique. Mr. Ludtka agreed but suggested that when talking character as it relates to land use the focus should be on scale, building styles, providing access and similar characteristics. Parks and open space as a topic is more focused on landscaping, passive and active recreation, and gateways.

There was agreement to retain the community character theme with parks and open space broken out as a separate theme.

Mr. Ludtka suggested the planning horizon for the study should be clearly stated in the criteria. Mr. Bergstrom said official planning horizon was 20 years.

Co-Chair Hamlin suggested that the overall character of the corridor could potentially constitute an extensive discussion and would be difficult to capture in a couple of bullet points. Mr. Bergstrom said elements of each of the themes will ultimately influence the character of the corridor. For instance, there is not much housing in the area currently, and if more is added the character of the corridor will change. Keeping an emphasis on office will have one impact on character, whereas increasing retail uses will have another.

Mr. Ludtka commented that much of the work will be driven by ideals relative to the market feasibility and economic development. The Committee should give consideration to how the corridor relates to the rest of the city. The Bel-Red corridor has been heralded to be the next area of real growth for the city, but the Committee should think about how much new growth should be absorbed in the Eastgate/I-90 corridor.

Mr. Stokes said the Eastgate/I-90 corridor is unique in that it has the freeway running through the middle of it. People pass through from the Eastside and from Seattle.

Growth in Issaquah during the next 20 years could have a very large impact on the corridor. Mr. Bergstrom said that certainly will come through in the planning process.

Ms. Welti questioned why market feasibility and economic development should be separate themes. Mr. Ludtka said the market feasibility element is tied to what the market will support, while economic development is focused on the kinds of things missing and needed to make the area whole.

Mr. Pucher said he did not grasp exactly what was meant by the notion of providing for special opportunities in the Eastgate area and thought it should be clarified.

Mr. Ludtka referred to the integration of transportation and land use and suggested language should be added identifying and promoting opportunities for all components of transit-oriented development.

Ms. Bruce commented that the SR-520 and light rail projects likely will be proceeding, as will the redevelopment of the Bel-Red corridor. The Eastgate/I-90 corridor will not be completely redeveloped but it will serve as the other side of the bracket, though probably not within 20 years. The corridor certainly will become the entry point from the east. One unique feature the corridor will have to deal with is the fact that it is divided by I-90.

Co-Chair Larrivee said the talk has been about treating the corridor as a unified area, but the challenge and one criteria should be that whatever is done will bring unity to the area as a whole. Ms. Bruce agreed and suggested the criteria should be under either community character or integration of transportation and land use.

Mr. Bohman stressed the importance of unifying the corridor and suggested it should not be swept under the rug based on cost.

Ms. Solemsaas suggested the partnerships criteria may be too simplified. She said she did not want the theme to limit partnerships to Bellevue College in terms of market stability and economic development. The notion of partnerships should be included under economic development and community character as well.

Co-Chair Hamlin agreed and said he did not think enough was being said about what the college does for the area. The college is a major player in the corridor and should be recognized as such.

Mr. Ludtka agreed as well and pointed out that there are also private development opportunities for partnerships, as well as the state.

**5. Public Comment – None**

**6. Adjourn**

Co-Chair Larrivee adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.